

Message Text

SECRET

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42

ACTION SS-25

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O 031208Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9670

S E C R E T NEW DELHI 8889

EXDIS

FOLNG FROM MADRAS DTD JUL 3.

QTE: MADRAS 0891

EXDIS

EYES ONLY FOR AMBASSADOR AND ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION

E.O. 11652: XGDS - 4

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: MINISTERIAL QUERY RE U.S. ATTITUDE TOWARDS
TAMIL NADU INDEPENDENCE

1. I CALLED ON TAMIL NADU MINISTER OF LABOR AND HOUSING RAJARAM AT HIS RESIDENCE LAST EVENING, AND PRESENTED HIM A COPY OF THE LATEST FOREIGN SERVICE NEWSLETTER IN WHICH HIS PICTURE WITH SECRETARY SIMON APPEARS. THE MINISTER IMMEDIATELY ASKED WHAT MY REACTION WAS TO WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN INDIA. I BEGAN TO REPLY ALONG THE LINES THAT A LOT HAD HAPPENED SINCE WE LAST MET. HE INTERRUPTED AND SAID: "I'M GLAD YOU CAME BY BECAUSE I WAS GOING TO CONTACT YOU. I WANT TO ASK YOU A LEADING QUESTION. WOULD THE UNITED STATES GIVE ASSISTANCE TO US IF TAMIL NADU DECIDED TO BECOME INDEPENDENT?" I SAID I WOULD REPLY EQUALLY DIRECTLY, AND THE ANSWER WAS NO; THIS WAS AN INTERNAL AFFAIR OF INDIA AND WE SUPPORTED THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES. I ASKED IF THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT WAS BEING SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED. HE SAID NO, NOT AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS; THE DMK HAD SEVERAL YEARS AGO ABANDONED SECESSION AS A POLICY.

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BUT A LOT OF THE YOUNGER PEOPLE IN THE PARTY HAVE BEEN TALKING

ABOUT IT IN THE PAST FEW DAYS. THESE YOUNGER PEOPLE, HE SAID, ARE SAYING THAT THE USSR AND OTHER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES ARE BACKING MRS. GANDHI IN HER EFFORTS TO KILL DEMOCRACY HERE; IF THIS SUCCEEDS, COMMUNIST INFLUENCE WILL GROW, AND TAMIL NADU SHOULD SECEDE AND THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE U.S. WOULD HELP HAS BEEN DISCUSSED. THAT WAS WHY, THE MINISTER SAID, HE HAD WANTED TO RAISE THE MATTER WITH ME.

2. RAJARAM DID NOT REVERT TO THIS AGAIN DURING THE REMAINDER OF THE CONVERSATION. WE WENT ON TO TALK ABOUT THE CURRENT ATTITUDES OF THE DMK AND THE TAMIL NADU GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE EMERGENCY AND RAJARAM'S VIEWS ON FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS WHICH ARE BEING REPORTED SEPTEL.

3. RAJARAM, WHO HAS BEEN A MINISTER SINCE 1971 HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY FRIENDLY AND ACCESSIBLE TO THE CONSULATE GENERAL. HE ATTENDED THE DINNER WHICH I HOSTED FOR AMBASSADOR SAXBE, AND HAS BEEN TO THE UNITED STATES TWICE. I AM INCLINED TO TAKE WHAT HE SAID AT FACE VALUE, I.E., THAT THERE MAY BE SOME TALK AMONG YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE PARTY OF POSSIBLE INDEPENDENCE IF THE SITUATION IN INDIA SHOULD DETERIORATE VERY BADLY, BUT THAT IT IS NOT SOMETHING THAT IS NOW BEING SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE HIGHER ECHELONS OF THE PARTY.

4. SINCE DRAFTING THE ABOVE, I HAVE BEEN VISITED BY A LOCAL EDUCATOR, PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN TO ME, WHO HAD ASKED FOR AN APPOINTMENT A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO. HE CLAIMED CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE CONSULATE IN THE DAYS OF HANK RAMSAY AND PAUL SHERBERT. HE SAID HIS CONCERN OVER THE CURRENT SITUATION HAD LED HIM TO CALL ON THE CHIEF MINISTER YESTERDAY AND TO TELL THE CHIEF MINISTER THAT THE SITUATION MIGHT BECOME SO BAD THAT TAMIL NADU SHOULD TRY TO BECOME INDEPENDENT AND THAT, IF THE REST OF INDIA WERE UNDER A COMMUNIST-INFLUENCED DICTATORSHIP, THE U.S. MIGHT HELP. HE SAID THE CHIEF MINISTER HAD REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT,

BUT HE WAS WATCHING THE SITUATION CLOSELY; WITH REGARD TO THE U.S., THE CHIEF MINISTER SAID THAT, AFTER VIETNAM, HE DID NOT THINK THE U.S. WOULD TAKE ON ANYTHING NEW IN ASIA. ALL OF THE ABOVE WAS A PRETTY ONE-SIDED CONVERSATION,
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AS I HAD INITIALLY TOLD HIM I WAS NOT GOING TO COMMENT ON THE SITUATION AT ALL.
EAVES UNQUOTE
SAXBE

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